



Economic and Social Council

Provisional

13 March 2007

Original: English

Organizational session for 2007

Provisional summary record of the 6th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 2 March 2007, at 11 a.m.

President: Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

Other matters

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.



The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*) (E/2006/31, E/2007/1 and Corr.1, E/2007/2/Rev.1 and E/2007/L.1)

Consideration of outstanding issues before the Council

1. **The President** said that the previous day, he had sent a letter to the Permanent Representatives of all Council members concerning the need for an early decision on the themes for the thematic discussion and the annual ministerial review. A successful high-level segment in July would be crucial to setting the stage for a renewed and strengthened Council.

2. He hoped that the Council was now in a position to agree on those two themes. He urged all delegations, in a spirit of flexibility and compromise, to come to a conclusion on those issues, as they would have a clear and direct impact on the Council's and the Secretariat's preparations for the July substantive session, which was only three months away.

Theme for the 2007 thematic discussion

3. **The President** said he took it that the Council wished to adopt the theme he had proposed for the 2007 thematic discussion, namely, "Strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macroeconomic policies".

4. *It was so decided.*

Theme for the 2007 annual ministerial review

5. **The President** said he took it that the Council wished to adopt his proposal that the theme for the 2007 annual ministerial review should be "Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development".

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **Mr. Miller** (United States of America) said that it was an historic day for the Council, which had identified the theme for its first annual ministerial review, an initiative that his delegation believed had significant potential to direct international attention on best practices and gaps in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

8. Even more significant, however, was the Council's decision to hold a separate thematic discussion emphasizing the importance of macroeconomic policies. The United States had come to realize, based on long experience with development cooperation, that the development assistance it provided did not and could not have a positive impact unless the macroeconomic policy environment in the recipient country (in other words, the constellation of its fiscal, monetary and regulatory policies) was transparent, honest and stable, recognizing market discipline and promoting the private sector.

9. Based on past experience, he had been concerned during the negotiations that such a thematic discussion might prove to be too controversial or perhaps unfocused for a year in which the Council was inaugurating significant reforms in its high-level segment. He was still concerned that the breadth of the topics the Council had chosen might make negotiations of an outcome document difficult or even impossible. He had become convinced, however, by the enthusiasm with which the developing countries had supported the idea of the thematic discussion, and by the President's persuasive arguments, that there could still be a serious discussion about the value and necessity of macroeconomic policy reform, and even perhaps ways in which to implement it most effectively. Hopefully, that discussion would lead to a convergence of ideas that would make the negotiating process easier.

10. The inclusion of "pro-poor growth" was also significant, since, as everyone knew, there were countries in which macroeconomic policies were controlled by undemocratic elites for their own benefit. Each country needed macroeconomic policies that were fair and equitable for all its citizens.

11. His delegation supported the themes just decided.

12. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the achievement of consensus following a long process that had begun with the World Summit Outcome and was part of the endeavour to strengthen the Council. The Group of 77 and China appreciated the breadth and depth of the themes ultimately chosen and their emphasis on promoting pro-poor sustained economic growth not only at the national level but also at the international level as well as the global perspective on macroeconomic policies. Even if the outcome

document was difficult to negotiate, the end-product would be worth the extra effort.

13. **Mr. Graf** (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union had voted in favour of the President's proposal for the themes of the high-level segment in the belief that, after protracted consultations, it was now extremely important to come to a conclusion. There was no more time to lose, and the Secretariat must be able to start preparations in an orderly manner. It would have been most unfortunate — and evidence of the Council's incapacity to deliver — if in the first year of its strengthened mandate, it had been unable to reach a conclusion on the issues to be discussed at its high-level segment.

14. The European Union supported the President's proposal because it formed the basis for consensus among Member States. It was concerned, however, that the formulation of the theme of the thematic debate lacked clarity and focus. The term "equitable macroeconomic policy" was vague and ambiguous; it must be complemented by other concepts, such as those set out in the Cairo Declaration of the Africa-Europe Summit, held under the aegis of the African Union and the European Union, in particular its paragraph 23, which stated that "only stable, predictable and equitable macroeconomic policies, in conjunction with necessary structural reforms, can create a climate conducive to economic growth". It was the European Union's understanding that, like discussions of macroeconomic policies in other forums of the United Nations system, the thematic debate would emphasize macroeconomic policies at the national level.

15. **Ms. Brown** (Canada), speaking on behalf of the CANZ group (Canada, Australia and New Zealand), said that, like the European Union, the CANZ countries had voted in favour of the President's proposal because they felt it was important to give the Secretariat what it needed to launch and prepare for such a critical year in the Council's history. The CANZ countries had been engaged in the discussion of themes, guided by their concern for the effectiveness of the high-level segment, particularly in a year that would feature the annual ministerial review and the launch of the Development Cooperation Forum.

16. The CANZ countries would also be guided by that concern in future discussions of themes, and by the

desire to see the Council increase its effectiveness. To that end, Member States should be encouraged during the negotiations to select themes that could attract high-level participation and be easily communicated to leaders and to a broad range of stakeholders, as the multi-stakeholder nature of the Council was one of its distinguishing features and value-adds. The CANZ countries believed that sharp, clear, focused discussion themes held the best prospect for high-quality reporting by the Secretariat and outcome documents that could yield results.

17. Like the European Union, the CANZ countries found the wording "equitable macroeconomic policy" vague and ambiguous and agreed that the interpretation and discussion of macroeconomic policy should focus on its implementation at the national level.

18. **The President** thanked Council members for their cooperation and, in particular, Mr. Ruiz Massieu (Mexico), for his work as facilitator of the negotiations. All concerns expressed had been duly noted, and he looked forward to frank and fruitful discussions during the preparations for the substantive session and in the drafting of an outcome document.

Provisional agenda and documentation for the tenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development

19. **The President** drew Council members' attention to the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its ninth session. He read out the following informal paper containing agreed language for a draft decision on the provisional agenda and documentation for the Commission's tenth session, prepared by Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Vice-President, following informal consultations on proposals contained in the report:

"The Economic and Social Council,

Having considered the proposed provisional agenda and documentation for the tenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as contained in the report of the Commission on its ninth session (E/2006/31), and

Recalling its resolution 2006/46 of 28 July 2006, approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the tenth session of the Commission as set out below:

Provisional agenda and documentation for the tenth session of the Commission

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

2. Substantive theme: 'Promoting the building of a people-centred, development-oriented and inclusive information society, with a view to enhancing digital opportunities for all people'.

3. Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes at the regional and international levels.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

4. Implementation of and progress made on decisions taken at the ninth session of the Commission.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat

5. Election of the Chairperson and other officers for the eleventh session of the Commission.

6. Provisional agenda and documentation for the eleventh session of the Commission.

7. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its tenth session."

20. He took it that the Council wished to adopt the text of the draft decision on the provisional agenda and documentation for the tenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, as contained in the informal paper.

21. *It was so decided.*

22. **The President** said it was his understanding that additional time was needed to conclude discussions on the remaining issues relating to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

Other matters

23. **Mr. Miller** (United States of America) asked about the extent of participation in the high-level symposium being jointly organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Government of

Austria in preparation for the Development Cooperation Forum, as well as similar preparatory events around the world. It might be more appropriate for proposals on preparatory activities for the Forum to be made within the framework of the Council, rather than the Secretariat. That would ensure a clear mandate for such activities and all Council members would then be fully informed and have the same opportunities to participate in all activities.

24. **Mr. Seth** (Director of the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that the symposium was a voluntary initiative by the Government of Austria that was not being financed from the United Nations budget. His Department was participating in the symposium in order to brief the participants on the concept of the Development Cooperation Forum. Such preparatory events were not in violation of any regulations, and experience had shown that they stimulated interest and involvement in the actual event. The issues raised at the symposium would ultimately be addressed by the Council during the July launch of the Development Cooperation Forum in Geneva, and in its decision-making process.

25. **Mr. Miller** (United States of America) said that his delegation was mainly concerned that the entire process should be open and transparent. It also believed that the inclusion of all Council members in such events would help to strengthen the Council.

26. **Mr. Seth** (Director of the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that, to some extent, the number of participants was determined by the resources of the particular country hosting an event. Within those budgetary limits, however, the host country made every effort to include a broad range of stakeholders.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.